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Winnipeg metro

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YES, YOU ARE PAYING FOR HIS MAKEUP ARTIST P.8

Jets in, thanks to Flames

Winnipeg Jets center Mark Scheifele takes a shot on goal against the Colorado Avalanche Thursday in Denver. It was a frustrating night for both teams as the game remained scoreless through three periods and was settled in a shootout. The Jets lost 1-0, but all was not lost as the Calgary Flames downed the Los Angeles Kings, clinching a playoff spot. Story, page 24. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RCMP probe suspicious packages

THOMPSON COURTHOUSE

Two employees treated for shortness of breath

Shane Gibson
Metro | Winnipeg

RCMP are investigating after suspicious packages were found at several provincial courthouses — including in Winnipeg — Wednesday.

The first turned up at the Provincial Court Building in Thompson around 3 p.m. and as the day progressed similar packages were found at courts in Brandon, Morden, Minnedosa and Winnipeg.

Two employees at the Thompson courthouse were treated at the scene for shortness of breath after the package was opened, and the building was evacuated while air quality tests were completed.

Assistant Commissioner Kevin Brosseau, Commanding Officer, RCMP "D" Division, said the packages are all large envelopes containing "a number of documents," but he wouldn't say what the documents said or what caused the employees' respiratory illnesses.

"We're in the early, early stages of this," he said, declining to say how the envelopes arrived. "I suspect that we'll have something to be able to share relatively quickly."

Brosseau also wouldn't say if the documents contained in the envelopes were the same at each courthouse, but did say police have reason to believe all the packages are related.

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Winnipeg

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W. Przybyl

February

N. Brar

S. Yeboah

March

M. Sohal

W. Weise

April

G. Miller

F. Zaffar

May

C. Mason

K. Brar

June

S. Maric

A. Brar

July

R. Lumsden

C. Glays

August

R. Legaspi

R. Wagemakers

September

D. Young

I. Palade

October

R. Hutcheon

D. St. Pierre

November

T. Myskew

L. Poole

December

L. Schaefer

N. Minuk

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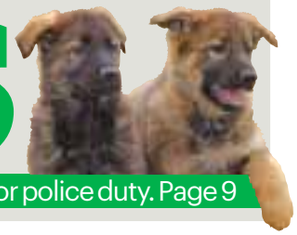

Puppies reporting for police duty. Page 9

IN BRIEF

Empty home reduced to cinders near Brandon

No one was hurt after a fire burned a home to the ground near Brandon.

Blue Hills RCMP said they responded to the scene at about 3 a.m. Tuesday and found the house ablaze. It was vacant, they said, and no one was injured.

Meanwhile, RCMP say they have made an arrest after the Midtown Motor Inn in Portage la Prairie caught fire on Feb. 28. While the fire was contained, there was extensive damage to one part of the hotel, said police.

RCMP said they arrested Jeffery Kirkpatrick, 34, in relation to the hotel fire. He is charged with breaking and entering, arson and breach of undertaking. METRO

Spring cleaning to start this weekend

Let's assume this means there will be no more snow this season.

The city says spring cleaning will begin on Sunday evening, with a focus on sidewalks, streets and back lanes.

Crews will begin in the downtown area, regional streets, bridges and overpasses, then fan out from there. Sidewalks on main routes, bus routes and collector streets will be targeted first.

Starting April 19, city crews will start collecting litter in parks and on boulevards. METRO

CentreVenture president and CEO Angela Mathieson and board chairman Curt Vossen speak to reporters following the downtown development agency's annual general meeting held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery on Thursday. SHANE GIBSON/METRO

CentreVenture saw $1.1M loss last year

DEVELOPMENT

Officials blame unsold assets

Shane Gibson
Metro | Winnipeg

The City of Winnipeg's arm's-length downtown development agency marked its 15th anniversary Thursday by announcing it lost $1.1 million in revenue last year.

At their annual general meeting, officials from CentreVenture said unsold inventory — including the St. Regis Hotel and the former Carlton Inn site at 220 Carlton Ave. — and a drop in the price of properties that are selling led to the less-than-rosy results.

"It's a matter of timing," explained board chairman Curt Vossen after the meeting. "Sometimes … you have to take some of these initiatives (by) priming the pump up front to be able to get back what you hope to achieve."

President and CEO Angela Mathieson said the agency is working with the city to find a new funding model to keep them out of the red.

CentreVenture signed an option agreement with True North Developments that would see the former Carlton Inn site developed into a multimillion-dollar tower, hotel and public square, but True North chairman Mark Chipman put the deal "on pause" in February after Mayor Brian Bowman was publicly critical of the level of transparency in the deal.

Mathieson and True North president Jim Ludlow, who attended the meeting Thursday, said progress is being made to get the project back on track, but as it stands, it's still on pause.

RAPID TRANSITWAY

City may need to borrow early on

Stage 2 of Winnipeg's Rapid Transitway is on schedule, but the city may have to borrow some cash to keep it that way.

All three levels of government have agreed to fund the project, but it's not clear when the city will receive money from the provincial government.

The province has agreed to contribute up to $225 million to the transit corridor.

"We had hoped the discussions would be settled by now," said Dave Wardrop, director of transit.

In the meantime, the city may have to borrow to cover bridge financing.

Upfront costs include things like land settlements and consulting fees, said Wardrop.

If the city does have to borrow, it's unclear how much the loan would cost.

"The amount and the cost of interim financing, if any, will be determined in the final negotiations with the province," said Wardrop.

The proposed 7.6-kilometre strip down Pembina Highway includes three overpasses, two underpasses and a tunnel under the CN railways south of Chevrier Avenue.

There are also plans to build a number of new bus stops and transit stations along the route.

EVA WASNEY/FOR METRO

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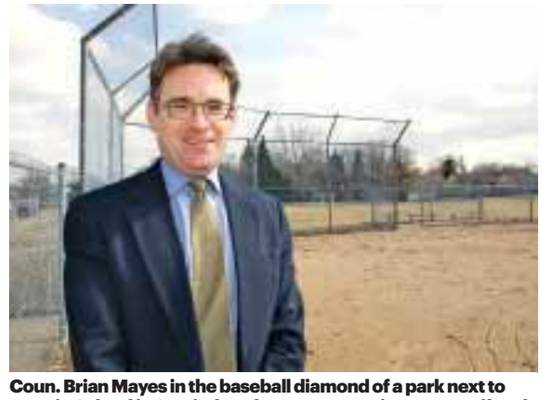
ANIMAL SERVICES POKER PUPS SO PASSÉ The city's Animal Services building is a little brighter, thanks to two donated murals: one by Nick Drescher and one by Danielle Trudeau, seen above. You are invited to celebrate at an unveiling and dog sale Saturday afternoon. COURTESY CITY OF WINNIPEG

Councillor pitches smart park name

ST. VITAL

Brian Mayes readies motion to honour Wayne Ruff

Eva Wasney
For Metro | Winnipeg



Coun. Brian Mayes in the baseball diamond of a park next to Darwin School in St. Vital. He hopes to name it Wayne Ruff Park in honour of a longtime educator. EVA WASNEY/FOR METRO

A little-known city park could soon hold the name of a longtime local educator.

Coun. Brian Mayes (St. Vital) is proposing part of the green space behind Darwin School be named Wayne Ruff Park.

"I wanted to honour (Ruff) because he had been sort of everything in education. He was a teacher, coach, principal, administrator, then after he retired he became a school trustee," said Mayes.

After a 50-year career, Ruff retired as a trustee in Louis Riel School Division last fall.

Ruff's accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. In 2015, he was given the Manitoba School Boards Association Presidents' Council Award, as well as the Dean Brown Award for Teacher Education in Manitoba as well as the Queen's Jubilee Medal.

Since the park sits right next to a school, it's a fitting location, said Mayes.

An invisible line separates the 4.1-acre parcel of land from Darwin's playground.

Mayes will make the proposal on April 13 at the next Riel Community Committee.

If the motion is approved, he hopes to dedicate a sign with a new name by the start of the next school year.

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NEW DEMOCRATS

Selinger welcomes party rebels back into the fold

Premier Greg Selinger appeared to put five months of bitter internal turmoil behind him Thursday as he welcomed back seven NDP caucus members who had challenged his leadership.

"We've come to the conclusion that it's time for caucus to be unified, and that principle was established and agreed to by everybody today," Selinger said following a day-long caucus retreat at a monastery north of Winnipeg.

"It was a respectful, honest conversation that came to a conclusion that we wanted to be unified to serve our constituents, to serve the people of Manitoba. Everybody saw their higher calling and put that first today."

Thursday was the first time the entire caucus had gathered since last November, when Selinger stripped the rebel members of some of their privileges, including the right to attend caucus meetings.

The rebels included five senior cabinet ministers and one backbencher who suggested Selinger consider resigning in order to help the NDP rebound from record-low opinion-poll numbers.

Theresa Oswald. METRO FILE

> **The (NDP) membership chose Premier Selinger ... I am respecting their decision.**
> Theresa Oswald

One of the rebels, longtime health minister Theresa Oswald, ran against Selinger for the party leadership last month and lost by a razor-thin 33-vote margin.

She left Thursday's caucus meeting two hours early because of a family medical appointment and said discussion of her status in caucus at that point was "ongoing."

Still, she felt very good about the meeting, she said.

"I think that people are able to share their feelings ... and also be very honest with one another about the fact that we've been on different sides of an issue over these last months and our journey to come back together is one that we have to work on together, collectively," she said.

Neither Selinger nor Oswald would reveal details of what was said in the monastery.

NDP party president Ovide Mercredi would only say the gathering allowed everyone to talk frankly.

"The process allowed each person to speak as long as they wanted to, each in turn, without anyone interfering."

Selinger said the rebels will have all of their privileges reinstated immediately and will attend all caucus gatherings in the future.

The decision will also allow them to move back into the NDP caucus office months after they were relegated to a different area of the legislature.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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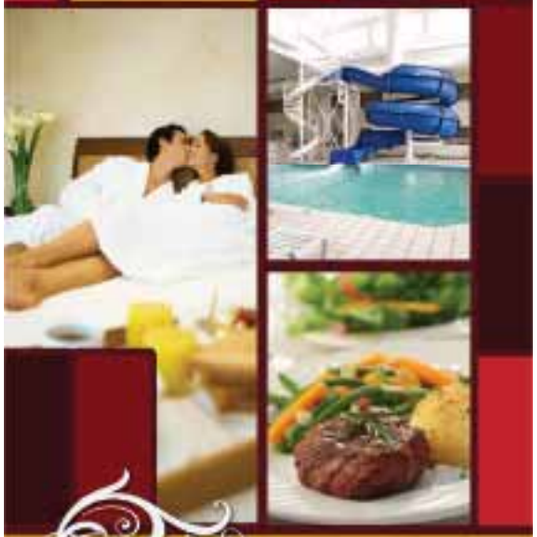

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Five youths have been charged with arson in connection to the huge fire that completely destroyed a Hargrave Street apartment block Monday night. SHANE GIBSON/METRO

Five teens charged in apartment arson case

CRIME

Police say a public tip led to the arrests

Shane Gibson
Metro | Winnipeg

Police have laid arson charges against five teens, including a 12-year-old girl, in connection to Monday night's massive fire at a downtown apartment block that completely destroyed the century-old vacant building.

The arrests come after police released descriptions of five young people witnesses reported seeing run from the four-storey building at 44 Hargrave St. as the fire started.

Const. Jason Michalyshen said a tip from the public led investigators to arrest three girls, aged 15, 14 and 12, and a 13-year-old boy Tuesday. The fifth suspect, another 13-year-old boy, was arrested Wednesday.

"This was a significant fire," said Michalyshen Thursday. "There was no question, based on the charges that we're talking about here, it put people's lives at risk."

The youths, who Michalyshen said were all arrested at the same location in Winnipeg, are each charged with arson causing damage to property, arson with disregard for human life, break, enter and commit arson, and possession of incendiary material.

"Given the nature of this incident — a million-dollar fire that put people's lives at risk — Criminal Code charges were appropriate," said Michalyshen. "We're hopeful and optimistic that these youth will go through this process of being charged, learn from it and make better decisions in the future."

Michalyshen said none of the accused has had previous run-ins with the law, and all five were released from custody on a promise to appear in court.

WOMEN'S SHELTER

Osborne House renamed Willow Place

Manitoba's largest women's shelter has a new name.

Willow Place is the new name of the shelter formerly known as Osborne House, which the province of Manitoba took over late last year.

The shelter houses up to 45 women and children who are looking for a safe haven after fleeing domestic abuse situations.

The province has turned it over to a new board with three founding board members: Rhonda Taylor, Angie Bruce and Linda DeRiviere.

Nine additional members are expected to join the board shortly, according to a news release sent out by the shelter Thursday.

43

Willow Place has 43 staff members including 23 full-time and part-time counsellors.

After years of public fighting, the province earlier this year ordered Osborne House's volunteer board to vacate the shelter by April 9 — the same day a $1.6-million funding agreement between the two parties was cancelled.

A representative of the Osborne House board called Metro Winnipeg to make the distinction that while the shelter is now called Willow Place, the Osborne House board is still a legal entity.

The move comes after the province took over management of the facility in 2013, citing concerns over the shelter's finances, staff morale and ability to deliver services.

The Osborne House board has always disputed the province's claims, and chairman Ken Lee said at the time the takeover had more to do with politics than the well-being of women and children.

"We have no other thing we can conclude because of the timing of everything and who is on our board," said Lee, a former CFO for the provincial Tories, who said the board was made up entirely of Conservatives.

A provincial spokesperson maintained the takeover came after independent reports found "safety, governance, human resource and financial management concerns."

Willow Place said it expects to provide 9,000 bed nights a year to more than 800 women and children.

ELISHA DACEY/METRO
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POLITICS

Harper to question allies about Iran deal: Sources

A skeptical Harper government will be pressing some of Canada's closest allies about their deal to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

The Canadian Press has learned Prime Minister Stephen Harper will likely discuss the Iran deal this weekend while he and U.S. President Barack Obama are in Panama for the Summit of the Americas.

Sources also say Foreign Affairs Minister Rob Nicholson will discuss the issue next week when G7 foreign ministers meet in the German city of Lubeck. Nicholson has already released a statement expressing skepticism about the deal reached by six countries with Iran to curb its nuclear program. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NDP launch complaint against Liberal leader

The NDP is seeking an investigation into Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's alleged improper use of parliamentary premises for partisan purposes.

The NDP's complaint comes one day after the Liberals sought an investigation into NDP MPs' allegedly inappropriate use of their taxpayer-funded constituency offices to campaign for re-election. Both complaints have been sent to House of Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer, who chairs the multi-party board of internal economy, which polices how Commons resources are spent.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

OTTAWA

GUARDING THE GUARDS

Ottawa Police Const. Santiago De Los Santos watches over the National War Memorial as sentries return to their post for their first day on Thursday. The Department of Defence has hired the Ottawa Police Service to guard the sentries, after Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, a reservist guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, was shot and killed by a gunman while on sentry duty on Oct. 22, 2014. The Department of National Defence is paying the Ottawa police an estimated $425,000 for uniformed officers to protect the sentries beginning this week and running until mid-November.
JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The bill for beauty

DUFFY TRIAL

Questions arise over who paid for makeup services

The prime minister might have had his makeup done alongside Sen. Mike Duffy in 2010 on one of their many appearances together, but a government source says the taxpayer didn't pick up the tab for that type of service.

Still, one month earlier, taxpayers did foot the bill for Stephen Harper's makeup artist to travel overseas for the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands.

The fact that Harper and Duffy employed the services of the same makeup artist surfaced in court earlier this week.

Defence lawyer Donald Bayne said Tuesday that Duffy had his makeup done for a G8/G20 national youth caucus event in 2010 and that Harper received the same service that day.

"The $300 (contract) paid not only Sen. Duffy's perfectly standard makeup for television — it's always done — but Ms. Lambert made up the prime minister of Canada," Bayne said in court.

31

Suspended senator Mike Duffy is facing 31 charges of fraud, breach of trust and bribery.

A government source, speaking on condition of anonymity, refused to comment on a matter before the court but did say that "these services are not paid for by taxpayers."

In fact, the taxpayer has picked up bills in the past for another Harper stylist, and around the same time period.

Michelle Muntean travelled around the world with Harper, applying makeup, styling hair, selecting clothing and trimming nails.

In 2007, Harper's office told The Canadian Press that Muntean's expenses were covered by the Conservative party.

But the Public Accounts of Canada, the government's annual spending report, tell a different story: the Department of Foreign Affairs paid her travel expenses, including flights, meals and accommodation.

The records for 2009-2010, for example, show she travelled with Harper on 13 different trips.

In May 2010, the records show that she accompanied Harper to the Netherlands.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C. team develops antibody for cancer

Researchers at the University of B.C. have developed an antibody that can slow the ability of aggressive tumours to grow and spread to different parts of the body.

Early testing in mice shows the antibody has the ability to "knock down" aggressive tumour cells and their ability to migrate and spread to other parts of the body, said Dr. Kelly McNagny of UBC's Biomedical Research Centre.

"It's all looking great," McNagny told Metro. "It's human cells in a mouse model, but we're excited about the idea of now developing more antibodies that we could start using to treat patients."

Developed in collaboration with the Centre for Drug Research and Development, the antibody works by targeting podocalyxin, a protein marker found in many highly aggressive tumours. Podocalyxin is associated with about five per cent of breast cancers, most ovarian cancers and some types of colon, renal and bladder cancers. Earlier studies on the protein marker have shown that its presence in tumours is linked to low survival rates.

McNagny and his team recently discovered that inhibiting podocalyxin dramatically slowed the growth and metastasis of aggressive tumours in mice.

"That's why we're excited about it," he said. "It seems to get rid of the cells that are residual and that move around to set up shop in other places."
THANDI FLETCHER/METRO IN VANCOUVER

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H is for Hero: Police puppies get names

LAW ENFORCEMENT

More than 21,000 names submitted by public

Thirteen puppies in training to be police dogs now have names.

There were more than 21,000 entries from across Canada to this year's RCMP Name the Puppy contest.

Because of the unprecedented response, Insp. Andre Lemyre, who is in charge of police dog services, chose 13 winners representing every province and territory in Canada, not just 10 as originally planned.

All names had to start with the letter H. For multiple entries of the same name, winners were selected at random.

The 13 winners will each receive a certificate, a laminated photo of the puppy they named, a plush German Shepherd toy dog named Justice and an RCMP cap.

"Everyone at the centre was blown away by not only the number but also the creativity of all the entries," said Lemyre.

"Congratulations to the 13 winners and my sincere thanks to every boy and girl who suggested a name."

RCMP police service dog teams search for missing or lost people, track and apprehend criminals, remove illicit drugs from the streets, detect explosives and search for and recover evidence used in crimes.

The Police Dog Service Training Centre is the national training centre in Canada for all RCMP police dog teams.

Ninety-three per cent of the German Shepherds working as RCMP service dogs were born at the centre as part of the RCMP Police Dog Breeding Program.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Three of 13 puppies in training to be police dogs, which all have names beginning with H. THE CANADIAN PRESS/RCMP HANDOUT

WE DUB YOU...

The winning names are:
Haley, Hammer, Hannah, Haven, Hawk, Herc, Hero, Hector, Hitch, Hooper, Hope, Hulk and Hunter.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS

Canada sixth in social advancement: Index

Canada continues to rank near the top of the world in a measure of social advancement that hopes to displace simple economic wealth — or gross domestic product — as the yardstick for national success.

The Social Progress Index, which is headed by Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter, delivered its third annual report Wednesday evening, ranking 133 countries on a basket of 52 different indicators.

Canada came in sixth overall as the most socially advanced country in the world — but was ranked first globally for offering its citizens what the study broadly terms "opportunity," a group of indicators that include rights, freedoms, tolerance, and access to higher education.

"Canada's ranking as the world's sixth most socially progressive nation is testament to a strong performance across the board, with stand-out results for inclusion, thanks particularly to a high tolerance for religious minorities and immigrants," Michael Green, the executive director of the non-profit Social Progress Imperative, said in a release.

High Canadian adult literacy rates and a very low homicide rate were also points of note.

The United States was ranked 16th in the world, having "underperformed" in relation to its relative economic strength, according to the Social Progress Index authors.

Two areas in which Canada does not excel are "ecosystem sustainability" — rated 48th among 133 countries — and "access to information and communication" — where Canada placed 25th.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BACKGROUND

The competition:
Norway, the small Nordic country whose vast sovereign wealth fund built on oil and gas revenues has been frequently contrasted in recent months to Alberta, was ranked as the world's most socially advanced nation, followed by Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland and New Zealand to round out the top five.

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IN BRIEF

French protesters march in nationwide strikes

Thousands of protesters, many blowing whistles and waving union flags, marched through Paris and other French cities on Thursday in a day of nationwide strikes that kept many children out of school, forced the closure of the Eiffel Tower and cancelled some 2,000 flights in and out of France.

Stepping up pressure on President Francois Hollande's already-unpopular Socialist government, the protesters aired an array of grievances against state funding cuts, planned increases in the retirement age and business-friendly reforms that could make firing workers easier. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Can Boston Marathon bomber's lawyer save him from the death penalty?

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's attorney is renowned for keeping her high-profile clients off death row, but Judy Clarke could face her most daunting challenge yet in trying to save the Boston Marathon bomber from execution.

Most of Clarke's past successes hinged on persuading prosecutors to take the death penalty off the table before their cases ever reached a jury.

She accomplished that on behalf of such killers as Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, Atlanta Olympics bomber Eric Rudolph and Arizona mass shooter Jared Loughner. With Tsarnaev, Clarke doesn't have that option.

A federal jury convicted Tsarnaev of all 30 charges against him Wednesday and found him responsible for the deaths of the three people and the killing of an MIT police officer three days later. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TV5 employees work in Paris on Thursday after the French television network was hacked by people claiming allegiance to ISIL. CHRISTOPHE ENA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISIL says group hacked French network TV5

PARIS

Prosecutor's office opens terrorism investigation

Hackers claiming allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) seized control of a global French television network, simultaneously blacking out 11 channels and taking over the network's website and social-media accounts. The attack appeared to be an unprecedented step in the extremist group's information-warfare tactics.

The hackers briefly cut transmission of 11 channels belonging to TV5 Monde and took over its websites and social-media accounts starting Wednesday night. The channel's director, Yves Bigot, said the attack continued into Thursday. He told RTL radio that the network has restored its signal but can only broadcast recorded programs.

The Islamic extremist group has claimed complex hackings before, but experts and a French official said the ability to black out a global television network represented a new level of sophistication for the group. The Paris prosecutor's office said Thursday it has opened a terrorism investigation into the attack.

Bigot said he was shaken when he saw the black screen across the network's broadcasts "and when we discovered the sense of the message appearing on our social media and our websites, it both allowed us to understand what was happening and obviously worried us."

The message on the TV5 Monde website read in part "I am IS" with a banner by a group that called itself Cybercaliphate. It was replaced later Thursday by a simple message saying that it was undergoing maintenance.

Hackers claiming to work on behalf of ISIL have seized control of the Twitter accounts of other media, such as Newsweek, and in January they hacked into the Twitter page and YouTube site of the U.S. military's Central Command.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls, on his Twitter account, called the attack "an unacceptable insult to freedom of information and expression," and French government ministers visited the channel's Paris headquarters Thursday.

TV5 Monde, which was founded by the French government in 1984 and calls itself the "worldwide French cultural channel," broadcasts news and other programs produced in France, Belgium, Switzerland and Canada. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

POLICE BRUTALITY

Critics want abuse claims monitored

The fatal shooting of an unarmed black man fleeing from a police officer has stirred outrage around the nation, but people in this South Carolina city aren't surprised, calling it inevitable in a police department they believe focuses on petty crimes and fails to keep its officers in check.

There is almost nothing in Michael Thomas Slager's police personnel file to suggest that his bosses considered him a rogue officer capable of murdering a man he just pulled over for a broken tail light. People in the community he served say this reflects what's going wrong with policing today: Officers nearly always get the last word when citizens complain.

The mostly black neighbourhood in North Charleston where Slager fired eight shots at the back of Walter Lamer Scott on Saturday is far from unique in this regard, said Melvin Tucker, a former FBI agent and police chief in four southern cities who often testifies in police misconduct cases.

Slager's file includes a single excessive use-of-force complaint, from 2013: A man said Slager used his stun gun against him without reason. But Slager was exonerated and the case closed, even though witnesses told The Associated Press that investigators never followed up with them.

Mario Givens, the man who accused Slager of excessive force in 2013, said he's convinced Scott's death could have been prevented if Slager had been disciplined in his case.

Civil rights leaders want North Charleston to create an independent citizens review board to review complaints against police. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Midwest braces for big storm

Derek Smith, 14, looks at the shattered rear window of his mom's car that was busted out by hail slightly smaller than a tennis ball that fell from a storm in downtown Farmington, Mo., Wednesday. DAVID CARSON/ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TORNADO SEASON

'Enhanced risk' of hail, high winds, tornadoes

A broad swath of the Midwest is girding for hail, damaging winds and possibly tornadoes as a strong storm front continues to rumble east.

The National Weather Service's "enhanced risk" area Thursday stretches from northeast Texas to the upper Midwest. Forecasters say Philadelphia, Washington and other parts of the Atlantic coast could see the same weather patterns Friday.

In Milwaukee, an interstate was closed for several hours Thursday morning after several vehicles became partially submerged in flood water due to heavy rain.

Tornadoes were reported Wednesday and early Thursday in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, but those areas saw minimal damage from the year's first widespread bout of severe weather.

In central Indiana, a 75-year-old woman died Wednesday night after being swept into a rain-swollen creek near Indianapolis. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BACKGROUND

Hail, hail rock and roll

Some of the hail stones that were slightly smaller than a tennis ball that fell in downtown Farmington, Mo., on Wednesday, April 8, 2015. Numerous cars sustained broken windows from the hail.

DAVID CARSON/ ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

GM's hybrid sales a bust

General Motors will stop making the Chevrolet Volt for four weeks in June and July due to slow sales and to deal with the change to an all-new version of the gas-electric hybrid car.

Sales of electric and hybrid cars have slowed this year, largely due to low gasoline prices. The national average for a gallon of regular gas was about $2.40 on Thursday, 35 per cent lower than last year's peak of $3.70.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Record fine for gas pipeline explosion

California's largest power utility says it won't appeal a record $1.6 billion penalty from the state for a 2010 gas pipeline explosion that killed eight people in a San Francisco suburb.

Utility regulators approved the penalty against Pacific Gas & Electric Co. on Thursday.

PG&E CEO Tony Earley says in a statement that the utility's focus would be on completing safety improvements in its natural-gas operations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KENYA

Police urge citizens to resist militants

Kenyans confronted by armed Islamic extremists should fight back and avoid being killed "like cockroaches," a senior police official said Thursday at a Nairobi morgue holding the bodies of some of the 148 people who died in last week's attack on a college.

Some Kenyans, however, said it was difficult to expect civilians to resist militants and that it was the government's responsibility to protect them. The Kenyan government has faced criticism for an allegedly slow response by security forces to the April 2 attack on Garissa University College in eastern Kenya.

Many of those who died likely had no chance or any means to fight back effectively. The assailants were heavily armed and, according to survivors, were swift and ruthless while gunning down unarmed, terrified students.

"If something happens like that, fight back," Pius Masai Mwachi, a Kenyan police superintendent, said to journalists.

Former student leader Kim Kemboi described fighting back as an option, saying he recently viewed a video produced by the City of Houston, Tex., that recommends people under assault try to run, or hide if fleeing is not possible. As a last resort, it says people should fight an attacker by whatever means they can.

The four gunmen died when an elite team of police commandoes entered the campus.

Any Kenyans who fall into the hands of militants should not allow themselves to be divided along ethnic and religious lines, "like what happened in the Garissa attack," Mwachi also said.

Survivors say gunmen from the al-Shabab extremist group targeted Christian students for killing after separating them from Muslims, though there were also many accounts of indiscriminate shooting.

"If you are in the hands of terrorists, free yourselves as soon as possible," said Mwachi, suggesting that people shout and be disruptive until help arrives. "Don't just be killed like cockroaches."

"It's not the work of the citizens to protect themselves," said human rights activist Boniface Mwangi said, citing a "social contract" that requires the government to safeguard its people.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Couple sues sperm bank over donor info

GEORGIA

Canadians say U.S. firm did not tell them correct details

A U.S. sperm bank said Thursday it did not verify the personal information of a donor used by a Canadian couple who are now suing the company, alleging they were never told the man was a schizophrenic with a criminal record.

In an open letter, the president of Xytex Corp. said a careful review of its records had determined the Canadian couple's claims "do not reflect" the information the donor provided to the company.

"We stand by the process we followed and intend to vigorously defend ourselves against the allegations in this lawsuit," Kevin M. O'Brien said in the letter.

Port Hope, Ont., residents Angela Collins and Margaret Elizabeth Hanson allege that Xytex told them their choice of donor was a healthy man with multiple degrees who was "among their best donors."

In a statement of claim filed with a Georgia court, the couple alleges they only accidentally learned the identity of their donor — years after their son was born. Through their own research, they contend, they realized the donor, James Christopher Aggeles, was a college dropout who had been arrested for burglary at one point and had schizophrenia.

None of the allegations contained in the statement of claim have been proven in court.

The couple is now seeking damages for pain, suffering and financial losses as it alleges Xytex engaged in fraud, misrepresentation, negligence and battery, among other claims.

But Xytex claims it has done nothing wrong. The company said it wanted to assure the public that claims it misled a client are "simply not true."

"We followed thorough procedures to review the health of the donor. As you may know, this vetting process eliminates 99 per cent of the potential donors who apply to Xytex," O'Brien explained in his letter.

"In this case, the donor underwent a standard medical exam and provided extensive personal and health information."

The suit states Aggeles appears to have fathered 36 children. Lawyer Nancy Hersh said she had at least 15 other clients who may be joining the lawsuit. THE CANADIAN PRESS

WHAT THEY SAID

The couple:
In their statement of claim, Ontario couple Angela Collins and Margaret Elizabeth Hanson say they learned through emails sent from Xytex in error that their sperm donor, James Christian Aggeles, was schizophrenic, "held no degrees whatsoever," had been arrested for burglary and that his photos had been doctored to remove a large mole on his cheek.

The sperm bank:
The donor reported a "good health history" and stated in his application that he had no physical or medical impairments, Xytex president Kevin O'Brien said. The donor also provided the company with signed photos of himself and gave Xytex copies of his undergraduate and graduate university degrees, O'Brien said.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GADGETS

Apple Watch ready for online orders

Buying an Apple Watch won't be as simple as walking into an Apple store and handing over your credit card.

The smartwatch comes in 54 configurations — more than any other Apple gadget. So starting Friday, Apple stores will have staff trained to help you choose. You'll then have to place your order for shipping starting April 24.

Prices range from $349 US to $17,000 US, depending on the watch case, band and size.

If you know the specific configuration you want, you're best off ordering it online, starting at 12:01 a.m. PDT Friday (3:01 a.m. EDT). There won't be an in-store pick-up option.

Besides the United States, the watch is available to customers in Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan and the United Kingdom.

For the most part, watches will be available for viewing when stores open Friday, so many overseas stores will actually show the watch before orders are accepted.

Only some stores will carry the 18-karat gold luxury models known as Edition. When you make the try-on reservation, you'll have to specify whether you're looking for these models or the cheaper ones. Specialists will handle these luxury appointments. If you're just interested in seeing them, all stores will have them for viewing in glass cases. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS PRIVACY

Police requests for customer info drop

Rogers Communications says it saw a sharp drop in the number of requests for customer information from government and police agencies last year — a result of swelling public concern and a landmark court ruling on telecommunications privacy.

Rogers received fewer than 114,000 such requests for subscriber information in 2014, down from almost 175,000 the previous year, the company said in its annual transparency report released Thursday.

Last summer, Rogers said it would no longer routinely give basic customer information to police and security agencies without a warrant.

The move came after the Supreme Court of Canada last June ruled police need judicial authorization to get personal information about customers from Internet providers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SMARTPHONES

Samsung bets on new S6 to end sales slump

When Samsung dubbed development of its latest smartphones "Project Zero," it was sounding a note of desperation as sales tumbled and it lost pole position in the crucial Chinese market to rivals Xiaomi and Apple.

The results of its overhaul, the flagship Galaxy S6 smartphone and the S6 Edge, go on sale in 20 countries on Friday. Samsung, which said "Project Zero" signified starting from scratch, is hoping a revamped design, a more intuitive interface and less clutter will help claw back lost market share.

They are Samsung's first flagship products to hit shelves since its mobile business suffered a 40 per cent slump in earnings last year. It was the only top-five smartphone maker to sell fewer phones.

Pre-launch reviews praised Samsung's decision to ditch a plastic body and replace it with glass and metal for the new phones. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Bell Media president out
The president of Canada's largest communications company abruptly left his post Thursday, two weeks after he admitted to trying to influence national news coverage. A corporate statement announcing the departure of Bell Media president Kevin Crull left little doubt of the link between his leaving and his interference in CTV's coverage of the broadcast regulator. Crull sparked widespread criticism last month for demanding CTV journalists not give any airtime to Jean-Pierre Blais, chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

DOLLAR 79.42¢ (-0.34¢)
TSX 15,326.31 (+112.71)
OIL $50.79 US (+37¢)
GOLD $1,193.60 US (-$9.50)

NATURAL GAS: $2.528 US (-9.1¢)
DOW JONES: 17,958.73 (+56.22)

TAP. TAP. TAP.

THE KOHLER REPORT

Rebecca Kohler

Hi, my name is Rebecca and I'm an iAddict. This is a hard day for me because it's the day the Apple Watch goes on pre-order. I must stay strong.

The idea of the Apple Watch gives me a nervous breakdown. I already have a MacBook, an iPod, an iPhone and an iPad — this is not a humble brag, it's more a humiliating admission.

When the iPad came out, I felt like Goldilocks: "My laptop is too big and my iPhone is too small, but that iPad looks juuuussst right."

And now, Apple is releasing a watch that tells time, checks emails, takes calls and makes the Casio calculator watch I had in Grade 3 look like a joke.

Can I resist? And if I don't, what will happen to my social skills? What will happen to my credit card? And what will happen to my brain?

Sometimes I come home tired, wanting to relax. I'll sit on the couch and start scrolling through Netflix (ahem, on my Apple TV), then I'll hear my phone buzz. As I try to ignore that, I'll hear the bleep of a Facebook message coming through my computer, then the ding of a text, and the chime of an email.

You know the feeling, right? It's both intriguing and exhausting, like "I wonder who that is" mixed with "who the hell is that?"

You try to hold out, ignore them, but as you watch that old Friends episode, the buzzes and the beeps and the chimes gnaw at the back of your thoughts like a rat whose teeth resemble the end of a USB cord. Finally, you give in and you check the messages, often to find they're disappointing or stressful. "Oh, an ad for a vagina enlargement." Or "great, a friendly reminder from my accountant that it's tax season."

If I can barely relax now, I feel like the Apple Watch will take over my life. The chimes and buzzes won't be across the room anymore, they'll be on my body. Tapping me — the Apple Watch doesn't vibrate, it taps — taunting me. Every text, every FB invite, every Instagram of my friend Cathy's new manicure ... tap, tap, tap.

Sometimes I feel like I'm in a psychological thriller; like social media is a psycho neighbour who keeps knocking on my door to tell me what colour Kim Kardashian's hair is. And though I know this, I can't resist answering the door, just in case it's something else, something great.

I read an article recently about the fact that every time we check our messages or notifications or play Candy Crush, we get a hit of dopamine.

Dopamine is the same chemical released when a cocaine addict snorts a line or a smoker lights up. Though I'll be jealous of everyone that has one, I don't think I'll get an Apple Watch.

I'm already addicted and the watch sounds like hooking myself up to an intravenous notification drip.

Rebecca Kohler is a standup comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter at @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From **matrimonial marketing** to **suffocating welfare laws,** Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

Poultry pilgrimage

Two Canadian dads took their sons on a Kentucky Fried road trip of a lifetime. Travelling 3,400 kilometres from Montreal to the Harland Sanders Café and Museum in Kentucky, the families said three of the sons had never tried the crispy birds before and that they had never laughed so much in their lives. Goes to show that treating your fast food as an adventure can be amazing. Putting a ring on it, however ... (read on)

Speak now or forever hold the grease

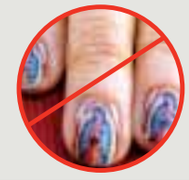
... Joel Burger and Ashley King are getting married and guess who offered to sponsor their wedding? That's right, the HOME OF THE WHOPPER® contacted the couple about footing their bill and they said yes! We see big things for any hyphenated offspring resulting from this blessed union. Imagine having a multinational there from the start, sponsoring finger paintings, catering birthday parties (mini burgers, duh), paying college tuition. Couldn't be happier for Burger King. Burger-King. Whatever.

Heavy stuff

As if it wasn't sad enough when undying chaos-demon, Lord and Master of Earth and lead singer of GWAR Dave Brockie, a.k.a. Oderus Urungus, overdosed last March, the band is now being sued by Brockie's father. Dad says the other guys stole his son's remains, guitars and other stuff. He claims he asked for the return of all of Urungus's remains, but instead got "a small fraction of his son's ashes which were delivered in a used plastic bag with a Discover credit card logo on it." The matter is tragically before the courts. But at least we'll always have the music.

Help the poor and needy

Some politicians are so petty and shortsighted that they can find no better use of their time than micromanaging the spending habits of the poor. If a new law passes, welfare recipients in Kansas won't be allowed to use their cash at pools, nail salons or movie theatres, and will be barred from withdrawing more than $25 a day at ATMs. This idea makes no moral or fiscal sense (you could probably get some pretty sweet nail decals for the same price as the fees you'd be paying on daily withdrawals), but when scapegoating the most vulnerable in society is your public-service priority, logic is mere trifle.



ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Women can get abortions, but individual women can't

I've never been faced with the abortion choice.

But if I ever have one, I know I'll fear the stigma and shame — not from the minority of pro-lifers in this country, but from within the pro-choice majority.

Abortion is framed as black and white. It's not. It's "thousands of different shades of gray," as a U.S. Vox Media survey released this week points out. Some people are both pro-choice and pro-life, and each draws the line in a different place.

That plays out in Canada, too: In a 2014 poll, 23 per cent of otherwise pro-choice Canadians said they feel we should have some restrictions on the procedure. We're also split on whether abortion should always be paid for, or only in medical emergencies.

Canadians gaze with scorn at the theatrical, divisive abortion politics of the U.S. We agree on women's right to choose, we congratulate ourselves. We applaud our reasonable laws, our legal, paid-for-by-the-government abortions.

But we are hypocrites. When it comes to supporting women who make that choice, we are silent. Women in general can get abortions. Not an individual woman.

There were 82,869 abortions in Canada in 2013. One-third of Canadian women will terminate a pregnancy. And yet I have personally only heard of two.

Of those two, only one was a friend who told me of her abortion. It was hard for her to share, and it's now a vaulted secret. Our friends are pro-choice — as are 60 per cent of Canadians — but we both still worry about judgment.

There are public campaigns to dispel the shame around mental health, so people need not suffer from isolation, or blame, but we say nothing about abortion.

Everyone has their own take on abortion, if they'd have one, when they might. For some women, it's a painful decision for which they might even shame themselves. These nuanced opinions creep into our health-care system and silence us among each other.

Canadian medical schools are failing to properly educate future doctors about abortion, due to both stigma and fear of offending students, according to journalist Danielle Groen, who's written about the issue.

Access to abortion varies widely across the country, and is notoriously difficult outside major cities — a bias caused in part by fear of stigma and one that undermines our supposed legal right, noted longtime abortion activist Joyce Arthur.

"It's one thing to have a right, and really another thing to implement it," she said.

We've already said it's OK, so why does it still feel wrong?

Because we don't have abortion "solved." We've only sewn up the politics. And until we work harder to diminish the shame, Canadian women will suffer.

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Your essential daily news

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SATURDAY, APRIL 11th · Pantages Playhouse Theatre

7:15pm · TICKETS: $35

Not a show about the 1400s! Jessica Holmes is our elegant and too-young host of a show that shares the highs and lows of growing old in the 21st century.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 11th

Gas Station Arts Centre

7:30pm · TICKETS: $18

As the resident left-winger on CBC's The Debaters, Charlie Demers is used to wringing laughs from lost causes – in this one-man show, he's firing punchlines against capitalism, and will have you laughing all the way to the barricades.

‹ WCF PRESENT ›

THE MICS

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SUNDAY, APRIL 12th

Club Regent Event Centre

7pm · TICKETS: $22

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MUSICAL GUEST: George Westerholm

ROAST HOSTED BY: Tyler Morrison

PERFORMERS: Rebecca Kohler, Al Rae, Bruce Clark, Ryan Belleville, Simon Rakoff, Darcy Michael & George Westerholm

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Your essential daily news

Ryan Gosling's directorial debut p. 18

Cashing in on our lust for love

ANALYSIS

Nicholas 'The Notebook' Sparks has yet another sticky sweet tale for us

IN FOCUS

Richard Crouse

Scott Eastwood and Britt Robertson star in Nicholas Sparks' latest lovey affair, The Longest Ride. CONTRIBUTED

Novelist Nicholas Sparks is the current king of romance writers. His flowery prose even gives Harlequin a run for their money in the three-hanky tear-jerker department. Who else could write a line like, "Love is like the wind, you can't see it, but you can feel it," with a straight face?

He is to romance writing what Buckley's cough syrup is to a tickly throat. They both get the job done, but leave a sickly sweet aftertaste.

His best-known novel adaptation is The Notebook, a cross-generational love story that spent over a year as a New York Times hardcover top seller. Inspired by the story of his wife's grandparents' 60-year marriage, the novel became a 2004 movie starring Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams. The tale of love and Alzheimer's is emotionally manipulative (writer Gary Panton called this passionate weeper "mushier than a mushed-up bowl of mushy peas that's just been mushed in an industrial-strength mushifier") but opening weekend it surfed a wave of tears to the box office Top 5.

Sparks, a former pharmaceutical salesman, writes tales of love and loss, of mighty obstacles overcome and lip-locks galore, which he defines as "dramatic epic love stories" along the lines of "Eric Segal's Love Story or The Bridges of Madison County ... But you can even go all the way back. You had Hemingway write A Farewell to Arms, the movies of the '40s — Casablanca, From Here to Eternity — Shakespeare, and that's the genre I work in."

He caught some flack for comparing himself to Shakespeare — one writer said, "If Sparks is like Shakespeare, then a house painter is like Picasso" — but the fact remains that his unconventional love stories, his parcels of passion, have made his name synonymous with the romance genre.

This weekend, prepare for another flurry of Sparkisms—tear-stained romantic letters, lines like, "Love requires sacrifice but it's worth it," and passionate make-out sessions — as The Longest Ride hits the big screen.

This time around "two stories separated by time, connected by fate," get Sparksified as the lives of a young couple, played by Scott "Clint's son" Eastwood and Britt Robertson and older lovebirds Alan Alda and Oona Chaplin, interlace. "I wish I could tell you it's all happily ever after," says Alda's character, "not everybody gets that."

Expect unexpected poignancy.

Critics haven't always warmed to Sparks's stories on film — Safe Haven with Julianne Hough as "a young woman's struggle to love again" has a paltry 12 per cent approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes, while The Best of Me starring Michelle Monaghan and James Marsden as high school sweethearts reunited after two decades sits at a miserable eight per cent rating.

But audiences can't seem to get enough of his weepy tales of unrequited love, lost love, mature love and love in a time of trouble.

Ten of his books have already been adapted for the movies, with one more, The Choice, scheduled for 2016.

His style of romance has caught on, but don't call him a romance writer.

"I write dramatic fiction. If you go into a further subgenre, it would be a love story, but it has its roots in the Greek tragedies. This genre evolved through Shakespeare. He did Romeo and Juliet. Hemingway did A Farewell to Arms. I do this currently today."

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

The Longest Ride	★★
Danny Collins	★★★
Cut Bank	★

HOW RATING WORKS

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When Kristen met Juliette

CLOUDS OF SILS MARIA

Stewart and Binoche talk film roles and easy rapport

Matt Prigge
Metro in New York City

When we spoke last October during the New York Film Festival, Kristen Stewart had not yet become the first American female actor to ever win a Cesar — France's equivalent of the Oscar — for Olivier Assayas' Clouds of Sils Maria. But she was still ecstatic about it. In the film she plays Valentine, the harried but cucumber-cool personal assistant of Maria Enders, a Juliette Binoche-like superstar played by Juliette Binoche. That allowed her to mock the film industry and the gossip machine from a safe remove. The two actresses paired together to talk about their rapport, and, in Binoche's case, to whip out one hell of a laugh.

Juliette Binoche, left, plays a famous international actress struggling to deal with her next film, alongside her personal assistant, played by Kristen Stewart, in Clouds of Sils Maria. CONTRIBUTED

Juliette, your breakthrough, 1985's Rendez-vous, was written by Assayas, and you reunited for his 2008 film Summer Hours. You instigated this project. What was your original concept?

Juliette Binoche: I wanted him to deal with the feminine. I didn't know exactly what it would be, but I was imagining these characters exchanging roles. I talked about Bergman. I said, "C'mon, you love Bergman! You made a book of interviews (from 2008)!" And I was a little frustrated on Summer Hours, as an actress. I thought he was shy and hiding. I said, "I was missing you!"

Kristen Stewart: It's like, "I want to know you!"

JB: "I want to know you," yeah! And he said to me, "Give me two weeks and I'll tell you whether I like it or not." Then he called me and said, "I have the subject." A year and a half later he gave me the script

It's pretty honest about what goes on in the life of a middle-aged actress. What was your reaction to it?

JB: I was shocked! I didn't expect it to be that way at all. I was provoking him (big, hearty laugh) and I got slapped back!

Kristen, you were supposed to be Jo-Ann, a younger actress ultimately played by Chloe Grace Moretz, but you insisted on taking Valentine instead. Why was that?

KS: That part is fantastic, but it's just not for me. It was something I knew so well that it wasn't interesting to me. I know Valentine so well, but I've never done it before. It'd be more interesting to say I gravitated towards the project because of the statements it made and the commentary that it is. But it was the emotional part that I really loved. And there's more irony and more layers steeped in her dialogue if it's coming out of my mouth. It's just the way it is. I've been there, I've been smack-dab in the middle. To directly address the media and talk about what precarious bulls — it can be sometimes and how we starvingly consume people — that was fun. I had to erase the glee from my face while saying those lines. I had to try to not look so excited about it.

> **"I've always gravitated towards American filmmakers who have a bit more fluidity and the balls to explore; and (who) live in something and don't need to control it so much.** Kristen Stewart

Your characters have such a comfortable rapport. How did you develop that?

JB: We took some appointments to help us develop our relationship. (Big, hearty laugh). When you like someone, you like someone. We became close in a natural way.

KS: If we hadn't, the movie would not have been good. Because I am not a liar. If this (connection between us) was not solid and this was not stimulating ... This woman makes me think more than most people that I've worked with. I'm constantly sitting there in between everything (thinking). She perplexes me a little bit, which is absolutely the right dynamic. We didn't have to fake it.

Is it getting better, or do you have to just go to Europe to get the great roles? Or is that just a cliché?

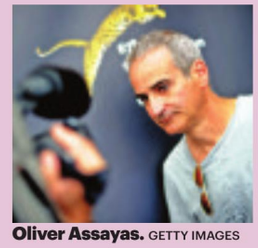
KS: If you were to get a consensus, then, yeah, absolutely. There are so many conventions in female roles in the States that it almost becomes — I mean, it's so cliché, as you say — it almost becomes stifling. And it's contagious. All of a sudden you think it's not going to be commercial and easily consumable, people are not going to make it.

It's either going to be the tiniest, tiniest, tiniest movie ever, or it's just never going to happen. I read really great scripts all the time that are different and go against convention and say something new. And they can never find legs. They never get made. It's a cliché because it's true.

DIRECTOR'S TAKE OLIVIER ASSAYAS

Filmmaker Olivier Assayas was partly responsible for Juliette Binoche's big break, and she his: In 1985 she starred in Rendez-vous, co-written by Assayas, his first screen credit. In Clouds of Sils Maria, she plays a very Binoche-y star, who worries that she's finally being replaced by the young.

"It's not about the cruelty of aging. It's about how to deal with it," he says. "It's not about rivalry. It's about a woman who ... has to accept that she's in another place, and that eventually a younger actress will look at her the same way she looked at an older actress when she was young."



Oliver Assayas. GETTY IMAGES

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Director banks on 35mm magic

CUT BANK

Matt Shakman forgos digital, gives up salary for debut film

Richard Crouse
Metro | Canada

Cut Bank director Matt Shakman has something in common with 35mm film fanatics Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino. For his movie debut the director insisted on shooting on film rather than digital.

"I'm an analogue kind of guy," he says. "To do this movie, which is about a town that feels trapped in a distant era, it felt right to shoot it on film. We had to find a way to deal with the financial impact of it, but I found a solution to that. I gave up my salary in order to do it.

"I'll only get a chance to make a first movie once and to make it on film feels special. I may never get a chance to do it again."

Set in the hamlet of Cut Bank, Mont., the action begins when auto mechanic Dwayne (Liam Hemsworth) accidentally videotapes the murder of the local postman (Bruce Dern). He reports the crime to the local sheriff (John Malkovich), hoping for reward money, but there are complications in the form of the suspicious father of his girlfriend (Billy Bob Thornton), a postal inspector (Oliver Platt) and a reclusive man (Michael Stuhlbarg) violently obsessed with getting his mail.

The script appeared on Hollywood's 2009 black list of the best unproduced films and has been in Shakman's hands for five years.

In the beginning he simply loved the twisty-turny story.

"Then," he says, "I (became) like a dog chasing a rabbit at the track. You get these tantalizing elements that start to make everything feel more real.

"When someone like John Malkovich signs on it is so helpful for so many reasons. One, the pleasure, personally, of getting to work with one of my heroes. Two, he certainly helps tell other actors that this is a party worth coming to and the third thing is just the business reality of having a person in the film who can help you with financing."

> **"You get these tantalizing elements that start to make everything feel more real.**
> Matt Shakman on making Cut Bank

Shakman says he knows after the film's theatrical run "a lot of people will see Cut Bank on their iPads," and while he prefers the communal experience of watching movies with an audience, he knows times are changing.

"They'll also watch Breaking Bad (on their tablets), so the line has blurred very much between the two kinds of content. It's all just become stories and where you choose to find them and how you want them delivered."

Crime thriller Cut Bank stars Billy Bob Thornton and Liam Hemsworth. CONTRIBUTED

Now playing

DRAMA & COMEDY

Danny Collins

Director: Dan Fogelman
Starring: Al Pacino, Annette Bening

Al Pacino stars as aging 1970s rocker Danny Collins, who can't give up his hard-living ways. But when his manager (Christopher Plummer) uncovers a 40-year-old undelivered letter written to him by John Lennon, he decides to change course and embarks on a heartfelt journey.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics:	Audience:
72%	76%

DRAMA

The Longest Ride

Director: George Tillman Jr.
Starring: Scott Eastwood, Brittany Robertson

Based on the bestselling novel by Nicholas Sparks, the film centres on the star-crossed love affair between former champion bull rider Luke and college student Sophia. Spanning generations and two intertwining love stories, it explores the challenges and infinite rewards of enduring love.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics:	Audience:
14%	+90%

ACTION

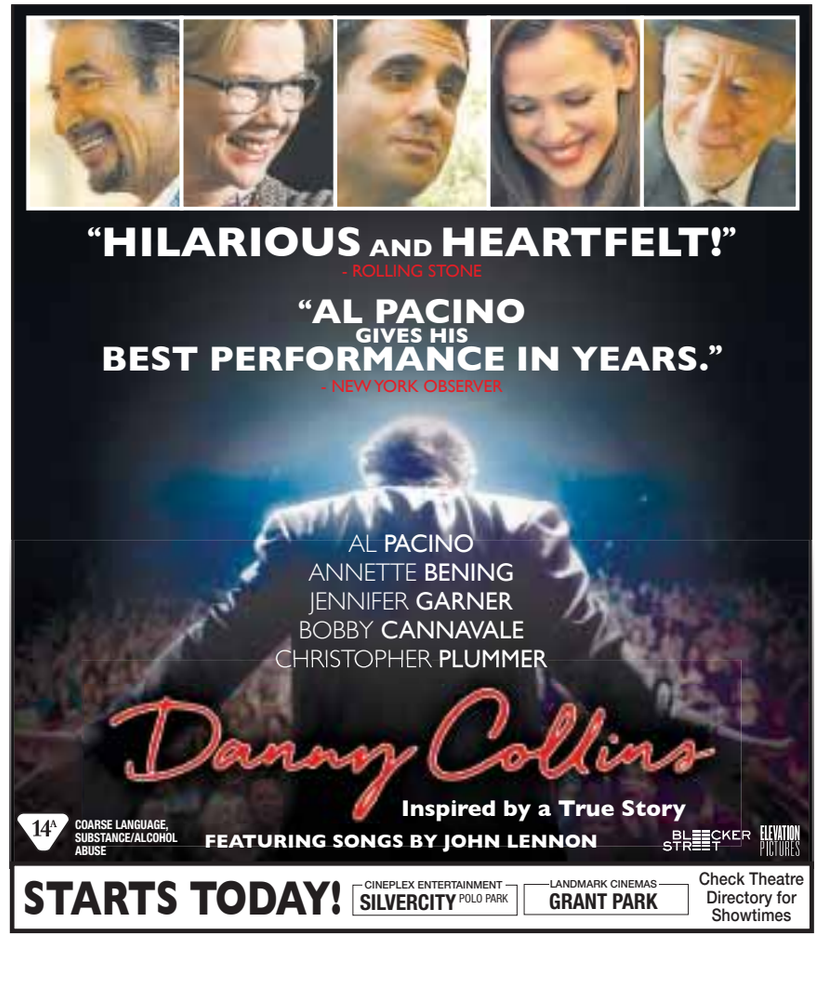
Furious 7

Director: James Wan
Starring: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker

Continuing the global exploits in the unstoppable franchise built on speed, Vin Diesel, Paul Walker and Dwayne Johnson lead the returning cast of Fast & Furious 7. They are joined by international action stars new to the franchise including Jason Statham, Djimon Hounsou and Tony Jaa.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics:	Audience:
86%	+98%



Ryan Gosling's Lost River is the Canadian actor's first directing credit. PASCAL LE SEGRETAIN/WIREIMAGE

Gosling's first film inspired by Detroit

DIRECTORIAL DEBUT

Lost River is about surviving in city that's falling apart

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Life

Lost River is the debut effort by a new writer and director named Ryan Gosling. Maybe you've heard of him. He's Canadian or something. We sat down with Gosling to discuss why the story of a young man and his mother (starring Iain De Caestecker and Christina Hendricks) trying to survive in the economic wasteland of Detroit spoke to him so strongly.

What was it about this story that made it right for your directorial debut?

I had written something when I was in my early 20s about child soldiers, and it was because I had gone to Uganda and Sudan and I had an experience that I wanted to elaborate on. I tried for a while to get that film made and I just couldn't. I just wasn't in a place in my career where I could make that happen. Then, you know, life happened and I was in more films, and then suddenly I went to Detroit and I had a similar feeling where I just felt a real connection to the place and had an experience there that I wanted to share and elaborate on. Sometimes you read a script and you feel like you could contribute by acting, and then sometimes you have an experience where it's, "If I don't write this, no one will."

Aside from Christina Hendricks and your partner, Eva Mendes, you've got a Brit, a Scot, an Irishwoman and an Australian playing Detroit residents. What do you have against American actors?

For the most part, I'd worked with everybody before and I just wanted to work with my friends on this film, and most of them I had seen a side of them that I hadn't gotten to see in their work, and so I wanted to write for that. But then there was this central character of Bones (De Caestecker), which was obviously the most important piece and the hardest to find, but Ian was so much more than what I'd hoped for. He just has a quality of wanting to highlight everyone else that's in the scene with him. He came (to Detroit) a month before hand and didn't tell anybody, started stripping copper in these buildings, and he walked every block of these neighbourhoods. He just brought this authenticity to it but just kept it in his pocket.

What was the process of you for defining the visual language of this film?

I had a year — not a solid year, by any stretch — but over the course of a year I took some trips to Detroit on my own and I was filming. And that really helped me — in one way because I felt like I was making the movie, even if it was just me, but that it had started and the train had left the station and now I had to finish. But it also helped me because now I had images that I knew were the film, not just inspiration for the film. I could show producers, actors, financiers, not "this is what it could be" but "this is what it is."

FRANCE

Who will be on the guest list at Cannes this year?

With the Cannes Film Festival set to open in just over a month's time, speculation is swirling over which films — and which top directors and actors — could be getting their moment under the French Riviera sun.

Cannes's organizers jealously guard their selections for the competition lineup and the out-of-competition program until a month before the film fest opens. This year, the movies to be shown at Cannes will be announced on April 16, and the festival will run from May 13 to 24.

THE SHORT LIST

The Cannes selection committee is screening 1,800 films — from start to end credits — to arrive at the short list for next month's festival

Woody Allen is seen as more than likely to be walking the red carpet with his new flick, Irrational Man, starring Joaquin Phoenix.

Cate Blanchett might also be along for her movie Carol. And fellow Oscar-winner Matthew McConaughey could appear for The Sea of Trees the latest film by director Gus Van Sant, which also stars Naomi Watts.

The director of the festival, Thierry Fremaux, said last week "there is no more than a third of the selection definitively decided." He added he and his selection committee "watch the movies right to the end."

Cannes mixes international art-house cinema, Hollywood blockbusters, extravagant parties, industry wheeling and dealing, and eye-catching publicity stunts in a potent cocktail that has made it the pre-eminent global showcase for movies.

So far the only movie confirmed to be screened is Mad Max: Fury Road. The dystopian sci-fi movie, the fourth in the high-action Mad Max franchise and the first to star British actor Tom Hardy in the title role, will be shown out of competition on May 14 just before its worldwide release.

Fury Road co-star Charlize Theron is expected to saunter up the red-carpeted steps. She could put on another dress for The Last Face, directed by Sean Penn and starring Theron and Javier Bardem. AFP

Mad Max: Fury Road, starring Charlize Theron, will be shown at Cannes just before its wide release in May. CONTRIBUTED

"THE BEST HORROR MOVIE IN OVER A DECADE."

— BOING BOING

"I'VE RARELY BEEN AS SCARED AS I WAS AT *IT FOLLOWS*."

— NEW YORK MAGAZINE

★★★★★

"REMARKABLY INGENIOUS AND SCALP-PRICKLINGLY SCARY."

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★★★★ — NATIONAL POST

★★★★ — NOW MAGAZINE

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Hemingway tackles mental illness, addiction in book

MARIEL HEMINGWAY

Tough topics covered by granddaughter of literary icon

Many people remember Mariel Hemingway best from her portrayal of the sweet teenager Tracy in Woody Allen's Manhattan, where she delivered the film's uplifting closing line, a reminder that "You have to have a little faith in people."

But Hemingway herself, then only 16, was living a life with much darkness in it; her family was plagued by alcoholism, drug addiction and mental illness. And suicide — including her famous grandfather, Ernest Hemingway, in 1961, and sister Margaux, the former supermodel, in 1996.

Hemingway, now 53, has written two new memoirs, Out Came the Sun, and a young-adult version, Invisible Girl, in which she frankly recounts her family's struggles. Here are some excerpts from a recent interview.

Mariel Hemingway recounts her famous family's struggles in two new memoirs. DAN HALLMAN/INVISION/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

You write at length about alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness and suicide in your family. Do you feel all these things are connected?
Yes, especially in my family. Look at my grandfather, this extraordinary man, Ernest Hemingway, the greatest writer of the 20th century. But he was also self-medicating pain with a lot of drinking. Then I look at my oldest sister (Muffet), who is still alive, who is wonderful, but ... I think her schizophrenia and mental health issues were triggered by drug addiction. My other sister as well, she was a major alcoholic. And you know, it's a chemical. It changes your brain. In my family, it was never one glass of wine. It was a bottle. And it changes people.

You write about how you've had seven people in your family commit suicide. And you've been involved in suicide prevention efforts. Do we have a lot to learn about suicide?
Suicide is extremely complex. It is not necessarily somebody who suffers long-term mental illness. It can be planned for 20 years, or it can happen out of the blue.... The reason I wrote these books is so that if Mariel Hemingway, who comes from this family that everybody (knows), if SHE talks about her story, maybe I get someone suffering somewhere in silence to find a safe space to tell their story. So that they can start to heal.

Why did you write the young adult book?
Because that's (the age) when I was the most scared. Also when I was the most confused. A lot of kids don't know that there's somebody out there that gets it. You don't know it's not normal. I thought that when parents fought and there was broken glass and blood on the wall, that you cleaned it up because this was your job.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HEALTH

Taylor Swift's mom is battling cancer

Taylor Swift revealed to her fans that her mother has cancer.

Swift wrote about the news in a post on her Tumblr on Thursday, which her representative confirmed.

Swift wants to keep the details private, but said her mother wanted fans to know what was going on.

The 25-year-old singer said she asked her mother to see her doctors as a Christmas gift. She said "there were no red flags," but they later learned Andrea Swift had cancer.

Though Swift is the superstar, Andrea has become a favourite among Swift's fans, often earning cheers from audiences at live shows.

Taylor Swift GETTY IMAGES

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COURT

Jon Hamm accused in violent 1990 frat hazing
Court records show Mad Men star Jon Hamm was accused of taking part in a violent 1990 fraternity hazing at the University of Texas.

The Emmy-nominated actor had not previously been publicly linked to a Sigma Nu pledge who had sued after he said was dragged around by a hammer and had his pants lit on fire. The pledge said Hamm participated "till the very end."

Records show Hamm was charged with hazing and received probation. University records show Hamm left the school the same semester as the hazing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An ABC comedy pilot involving sex columnist Dan Savage has Christian conservative groups up in arms. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TELEVISION

Savage-backed sitcom met with protest

Conservative groups are trying to kill in the cradle a prospective ABC sitcom about a family upended when a teenage son comes out as gay because sex columnist and gay rights activist Dan Savage is involved in the production.

The Media Research Center and Family Research Council said their members have sent more than 21,000 postcards and made more than 4,000 telephone calls asking ABC to abandon the series, tentatively titled The Real O'Neals. ABC is not commenting on the effort, while Savage said it is misdirected.

The show, which features actress Martha Plimpton as the family matriarch, is one of 12 comedy pilots the network is considering. Generally, about half of those pilots — at most — will get the green light.

Savage, author of the Savage Love advice column, said the series evolved out of a meeting he had with ABC executives where aspects of his childhood that he has written about were discussed.

While elements of the pilot were inspired by his experiences growing up in Chicago — the father is a Chicago police officer — the show "has evolved throughout the development process and it wouldn't be accurate to describe it as autobiographical," said Savage, an executive producer of the series.

Savage's very involvement angers the conservative groups. In a letter sent to Ben Sherwood, president of the Disney/ABC Television Group, MRC president L. Brent Bozell and Family Research Council president Tony Perkins cited Savage's "radical hate speech" and "venomous anti-Christian bigotry."

Savage wrote in 2000 about volunteering for Republican Gary Bauer's presidential campaign and, suffering from the flu, licking doorknobs in the office in an attempt to infect others. He also tried to give a definition of a gay sex act to Republican Rick Santorum's name on Google.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro TRAVEL

Everything noodle under the sun

JAPAN

Ramen soup so revered entire museums are devoted to it

There are two kinds of ramen in this world. There's the packaged staple of dorm-room cuisine, one of the most processed, industrialized foods ever invented. And then there's the trendy, artisanal, handmade soup that fans line up for hours to try.

But in Japan, ramen isn't just for eating: There are entire museums devoted to it. Yokohama, a short train ride from Tokyo, has one museum for instant ramen and another for handmade ramen, and both offer samples to taste or take home.

At the Shin-Yokohama Raumen Museum (the extra u gives the word a retro feel), you'll find nine shops showcasing different styles of ramen. The English brochure helpfully describes the soup at each, noting whether the noodles are straight, curly or wrinkled, and how thick they are using a five-point scale. The richness of the broth is also rated on a five-point scale.

At each shop, you order and pay for your ramen in an old-fashioned way, via a ticket vending machine in front with photos on the buttons. Some varieties are offered in small portions so you can try more than one type, although for some visitors, one small portion will be enough. If you can't tell, ask the staff which button is mini-ramen (the term is the same in both languages).

If you're weary of foodie seriousness about what is, after all, simple noodle soup, the antidote is just a short train or subway ride away: Yokohama also has a branch of the Cup Noodle Museum.

Where Shin-Yokohama Raumen Museum is a food theme park for adults, Cup Noodle Museum is designed for kids. The small print on its brochure notes that it's formally named the Momofuku Ando Instant Ramen Museum after the inventor of instant ramen. Run by an educational foundation that Ando started, the fun here is designed to support some high-minded goals with exhibits about creativity and invention.

Exhibits include a reproduction of the modest shack where Ando invented Chicken Ramen, a display of the astonishing number of varieties of instant ramen that the Nissan Food Products company has produced since then, and a food court called Noodles Bazaar. And there's a play area where kids can experience the Cup Noodle manufacturing process from the point of view of the noodle.

The main attraction here, though, is the make-your-own section. For a separate fee for a timed ticket, kids (or adults) can make their own personal Cup Noodle, decorating the cup, then putting in the noodles and choosing the soup and toppings. Watch the lid get sealed and the whole cup shrink-wrapped, then your creation is enclosed in a cool protective package that you pump air into to cushion it on the trip home. A warning: Cup Noodle Museum, educational as it is, is extremely popular with school groups and is packed with them some weekdays.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Instant ramen soup packages on display at the Cup Noodle Museum in Yokohama, Japan. The museum honours the inventor of instant ramen. LINDA LOMBARDI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An exhibit at Shin-Yokohama Raumen Museum, a food theme park devoted to ramen noodles, depicting storefronts in a re-created 1958 shopping district. LINDA LOMBARDI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IF YOU GO

Ramen museums

Shin-Yokohama Raumen Museum and Cup Noodle Museum in Yokohama, are about 45 minutes by train from Tokyo.

Websites that have directions in English: raumen.co.jp/english/ and cupnoodles-museum.jp/english/

DEALS OF THE WEEK

Air, Hotel & Transfers

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TRAVEL NOTES FROM FINDING THE LOWEST AIRFARES TO TIPS FOR WEST HOLLYWOOD

New: All-natural travel kits
The Canadian-made Consonant natural skin-care line has launched a couple of new travel kits full of miniatures of some of their top products. The company uses organic botanical ingredients, affirming that what goes on your body also goes in your body. Includes The Perfect Sunscreen, one of the smoothest, most non-greasy, mineral-based sunscreens out there. Pictured set, $225. Visit ConsonantSkincare.com.

Bucket List: West Hollywood
While L.A. can be overwhelming, choosing West Hollywood as your home base will make it manageable. There's a lot to do: Check out the up-and-coming comedians at the Comedy Store on Sunset Strip or prop up a corner of the bar at the Chateau Marmont. Pop into the Standard Hotel (pictured) for a dip in the pool and some lunch or play Spot the Celebrity at the Mondrian Hotel patio bar.

Tip: Find the lowest airfares
It's sometimes not where you search for cheap flights, but when. The moment you see an airline sale, wait until the next afternoon to hunt for a fare, because all the airline's competitors will be trying to match the previous day's sale price. The sweet spot for buying domestic tickets is 55 days in advance. Best day to fly? Tuesday, because there is less demand for seats and the prices are lower. DOUG WALLACE

Skydive without leaving Earth

IFLY

Experience weightlessness at iFly Toronto wind tunnel

There is a place just outside Toronto where humans can fly.

And flying makes a nice birthday gift, especially for a 12-year-old playing hooky from school.

Suzanne Lyon took her son, Jack, out of school last week to skydive indoors at iFly Toronto in Oakville, Ont.

Jack falls into the vertical wind tunnel where air rushes from below up to 250 km/h, or "a couple hurricanes" worth of wind.

Then he floats for a minute or two, like a skydiver would do after jumping from a plane. The experience is similar to free falling without the crippling fear that can come with hurtling toward Earth at breakneck speeds.

He dips, dives and sometimes crashes into the wall of the cylindrical chamber with instructor Adrian Uracz standing nearby, sometimes pulling him back and helping him.

He looks a little like a bird learning to fly.

Jack says it was "amazing" and "extraordinary" and "awesome."

But the actual experience is difficult to describe.

"I don't know what to say," says the boy of few words. But he smiles a lot.

Uracz is more verbal. "It's such a different feeling from what you would have in your everyday life."

Later the instructor shows the rookies how to really fly in the chamber, twisting, turning, flipping and floating at will, as if he lives in a world without gravity. Flyers can learn these tricks over time through iFly's academy with coaches like Uracz.

The facility opened last May and there are 23 others like it around the world, but a wind tunnel in Montreal is the only other one in Canada.

Four giant fans at the top of the building powered by 350-horsepower engines act like a vacuum and suck air up, before sending it back down nearby vents to recirculate. The flyer floats in the middle of this vacuum.

Both Jack and his mother have come before.

Her husband surprised Suzanne Lyon one date night with a trip to iFly — she thought they were going mini-golfing. They returned to let Jack fly and expect they'll be back many times in the future.

Maybe he'll never be able to put the experience into words, but if he can, it will surely involve a lot of superlatives.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **Amazing. Extraordinary. Awesome.**
> 12-year-old Jack

Jeff Finkler, left, is guided by an instructor while trying indoor skydiving at iFly Toronto.
DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

IF YOU GO

What you need to know
- iFly Toronto is open daily. Flights begin at $72.
- There are risks involved and pregnant women and those who have dislocated their shoulders previously shouldn't participate.
- Children aged four and up can fly but must be accompanied by an adult.
- Find out more at: ifly-toronto.com

A show for outdoor enthusiasts

This weekend at Red River Exhibition Park

It's every outdoor buff's dream — checking out all the latest gear in one place.

The Mid-Canada Power Sport Show, running Friday through to Sunday at Red River Exhibition Park, takes that dream one step further, giving visitors the chance to test drive an ATV, side-by-side or UTV on an outdoor course that has been set up adjacent to the indoor showroom.

"Not only do you have the opportunity to compare the different brands indoors, but you can actually try those brands on a course that offers a safe, controlled environment," says show organizer Dave Amey. "The demo experience is a once-a-year opportunity. If you're in the market for new outdoor gear, you can't afford to miss this show."

The show, in its second year, is organized by the Mid-Canada Marine Dealers Association, though it's owned and operated by local dealers, all of whom will be on-site for the show.

"There will be hundreds of brand new ATVs, side-by-sides, UTVs — even snowmobiles and aftermarket gear — on display under one roof," Amey says. "The dealers will be selling all that new product at their best prices, with special offers. There will be some great deals to be had."

CONTRIBUTED

The show also offers visitors a chance to support a great cause.

"Our charity of choice is Ride For Dad, which has two rides — an ATV ride and motorcycle ride — that raise money for prostate cancer awareness," Amey says. "They'll be at the show and will gratefully accept donations."

Tickets for the Mid-Canada Power Sport Show are $10 (children younger than 13 get in free) and can be purchased at the gate. For more information, visit powersportshow.ca.

CRITERIA FOR TEST DRIVES

Operating an ATV, side-by-side or UTV is serious business. Before you take one for a test drive at the Mid-Canada Power Sport Show this month, make sure you meet the following criteria:

- You must be 18 years of age or older;
- You must hold a valid driver's license;
- You can't have any alcohol in your system;
- You have to wear appropriate clothing.

"If possible, bring your own helmet and wear proper clothing because you're going to get wet, dirty and muddy," says show organizer Dave Amey.

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Friday: 4pm – 7pm | Saturday: 11am – 6pm | Sunday: 11am – 4pm

metro SPORTS

Saskatoon's Trey Lyles will leave Kentucky to enter this summer's NBA draft

WEEKEND, April 10-12, 2015

Jets land a post-season berth

NHL

Winnipeg advances to playoffs after L.A. loss

1	0
AVS	JETS

The Winnipeg Jets clinched their first playoff spot in eight seasons Thursday night, despite a 1-0 shootout loss to the Avalanche.

Ryan O'Reilly and Matt Duchene scored in the shootout, and Reto Berra stopped both Winnipeg shots. Berra finished with a season-high 41 saves, then stymied Blake Wheeler and Andrew Ladd in the shootout.

The Jets received help from Calgary to squeeze into the playoffs as a wild card, when the Flames beat Los Angeles. The last time the franchise made the post-season was in 2006-07, when the team was the Atlanta Thrashers. The Jets are making their first playoff appearance since relocating to Winnipeg for the 2011-12 season.

Ondrej Pavelec had another brilliant night, stopping 21 shots through overtime. But O'Reilly beat him with a backhanded shot and Duchene followed with another.

Colorado did not make the playoffs this season.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Jets' Jim Slater screens Avalanche goalie Reto Berra on Thursday night in Denver. DOUG PENSINGER/GETTY IMAGES

MORE SCORES

Senators 3, Rangers 0
Clarke MacArthur and Kyle Turris scored in a 1:04 span late in the second period and Ottawa moved into the Eastern Conference's first wild-card spot with a 3-0 victory over the New York Rangers on Thursday night.

Canadiens 4, Red Wings 3
Lars Eller scored 1:21 into overtime to lift Montreal to a victory over Detroit giving Carey Price a team record 43rd win of the season.

Detroit qualified for the playoffs by earning a point in the overtime loss.

Panthers 4, Bruins 2
Roberto Luongo earned his 401st career win and Jaromir Jagr got his 1,800th career point, helping the Florida Panthers beat Boston, damaging the Bruins' playoff hopes.

The Bruins have lost two straight after winning their previous five games. They trail Ottawa by two points and Pittsburgh by one for the eighth and final playoff spot in the East.

Blues 2, Blackhawks 1
Paul Stastny scored the game-winner, Dmitrij Jaskin broke a 16-game scoreless string, and Jake Allen made 21 saves as St. Louis clinched the Central Division title. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Spieth in familiar spot at the top

MASTERS

21-year-old has three-stroke lead after the first round

Jordan Spieth was already one of the hottest players on the PGA Tour.

He showed no signs of letting up at the Masters.

There are still three rounds to go, but the 21-year-old Spieth looks very much like the one to beat after opening with an 8-under 64 and making a serious run at the major championship scoring record Thursday.

If not for a blunder at the par-5 15th, where Spieth's tee shot left him perfectly positioned for no worse than a birdie but he wound up making bogey, he very well could have been the first player to shoot 62 at one of golf's biggest events.

As it was, Spieth came up just short of the record, which is 63, but can't complain about a three-shot lead heading to Friday.

Ernie Els, Justin Rose, Jason Day and Charley Hoffman all shot 67. Sergio Garcia and Russell Henley were another stroke back with 68s.

"To make nine birdies out there, that's a dreamy round for me," Spieth said. "It was a lot of fun."

None of this should be a surprise. Not the way he was playing leading up to Augusta, having won, finished second, and lost in a playoff in his three previous tournaments. Not the way he played a year ago in his Masters debut, leading on Sunday before fading down the stretch to finish in a tie for second behind Bubba Watson.

Maybe it was the experience last time that kept from getting too worked up about his brilliant start. There's an endless list of players who led a major after the opening round and were long gone by Sunday.

But it would be a huge surprise if Spieth fades away.

"I was leading last year at one point by a couple of shots on Sunday," he recalled. "It didn't go my way. I know how many things can happen in a major championship. I'll try to learn from last year and stay patient these next three rounds."

Meanwhile, Tiger Woods displayed improvement in his return to competitive golf. He's still got a lot of work to do, however, before he's ready to compete for his 15th major championship.

Woods finished with a 1-over 73. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CANCON

In Canadian results, amateur Corey Conners of Listowel, Ont., was 8 over while 2003 Masters champion Mike Weir of Bright's Grove, Ont., was 10 over.

Arnold Palmer, left, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player got things started Thursday as the honorary starters. TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Jordan Spieth receives a loud ovation upon scoring a birdie to end his first round of the Masters on Thursday in Augusta, Ga. ANDREW REDINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

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OMG: RESEARCHERS FIND REASON FOR THE DUTCH TALLNESS

The Netherlands is the land of giants: on average, its women stand almost 1.71 metres (5.6 feet) tall, and its men 1.84 metres. But how the Dutch became the world's tallest people has been somewhat of a mystery.

The average male height in the Netherlands has gained 20 cm (eight inches) in the last 150 years, according to military records.

By comparison, the height of the average American man has risen a mere six cm over the same period.

Researchers led by Gert Stulp, a specialist in population health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, combed a Dutch database for clues.

In this three-decade snapshot, the people who had the most children were tall men, and women of average height, the team found. For example, the most fertile men were 7 cm above the average height. Statistically, they had 0.24 more children on average than the least fertile men, who were about 14 cm below the average height.

Compared to counterparts in other countries where they often tended to have fewer children, taller women also reproduced more in the Netherlands.

There seems to be a cultural preference as well.

Stulp pointed to figures showing that, in the United States, shorter women and men of average height have the most reproductive success. AFP

Today's horoscope

The planets have moved in your favour. Get a second opinion and find a safe and reliable vehicle that fits your budget.

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Someone in a position of authority can and will help you out over the next 24 hours, if you ask them to. Not even an Aries can do it all by themselves.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
If you have a good idea today you must let others know about it, especially those who can support you and guide you. Sharing what you know is always good business.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Family matters are under excellent stars at the moment, so if you need to get back on good terms with a loved one now is the time to kiss and make up.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You will have to deal with a difficult person today but are advised not to do anything that could turn them against you. According to the planets you will need this person's assistance very soon.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You will discover something about a friend or work colleague today that answers a lot of questions. What you discover might be amusing but you are advised to keep it to yourself.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You need to make your peace with someone you have fallen out with in recent weeks. The planets suggest that if you make the effort you won't be disappointed.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Open up and reveal your true feelings today. If you are not happy with something, or someone, then say so. Don't make it hard for others to read your mood.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Someone older and wiser will give you some valuable advice today and if you are smart you will take it. You may be doing well but you could be doing even better.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Others may say you are being too careful, and maybe you are, but don't change your ways to please them. Looked at from another perspective, they're taking too many chances.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may want to help someone in need but some people prefer to suffer in silence than admit they need assistance. Respect their wishes.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may be sad that something, or someone, is going out of your life but don't shed too many tears. The good news is that something, or someone, even better will come along to fill it.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Your viewpoint on an important issue will change dramatically over the next 48 hours — you may even end up at the opposite end of the opinion spectrum to where you are now.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green
Every row, column and box contains 1-9

	5		7		2		9	
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			9		3			
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RECIPE Hoisin Chicken with Mushrooms and Bell Peppers

EAT LIGHT AT HOME

Rose Reisman
rosereisman.com
@rosereisman

Ready in
Prep time: 15
Cook time: 35

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Lightly coat a 9- x 13-inch casserole dish with vegetable spray.

2. Dust the chicken with the flour. In a large skillet lightly coated with cooking spray, add 2 tsp of the vegetable oil and set over medium heat. Add the chicken and sauté for about 8 minutes or until browned on all sides. Place in the casserole dish.

3. Wipe and respray the skillet, add the remaining 2 tsp of vegetable oil. Add the onion and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and sauté for 8 minutes or until the mushrooms are no longer wet. Add the bell pepper and sauté for 4 minutes.

4. Whisk together the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, water, garlic, ginger, sesame oil and rice vinegar in a small bowl. Add to the vegetables and cook for 1 minute. Pour over the chicken and bake for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the chicken is done. Garnish with sesame seeds and cilantro if using. Serve over rice or noodles.

Ingredients
- 1 1/2 lb skinless boneless chicken thighs (about 6 thighs)
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups sliced onion
- 4 cups sliced button mushrooms
- 1 1/3 cups sliced yellow or red bell pepper
- 1 1/2 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tbsp hoisin sauce
- 1 tbsp water
- 2 tsp finely chopped garlic
- 2 tsp finely chopped ginger
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds
- 3 tbsp choppeed cilantro (optional)

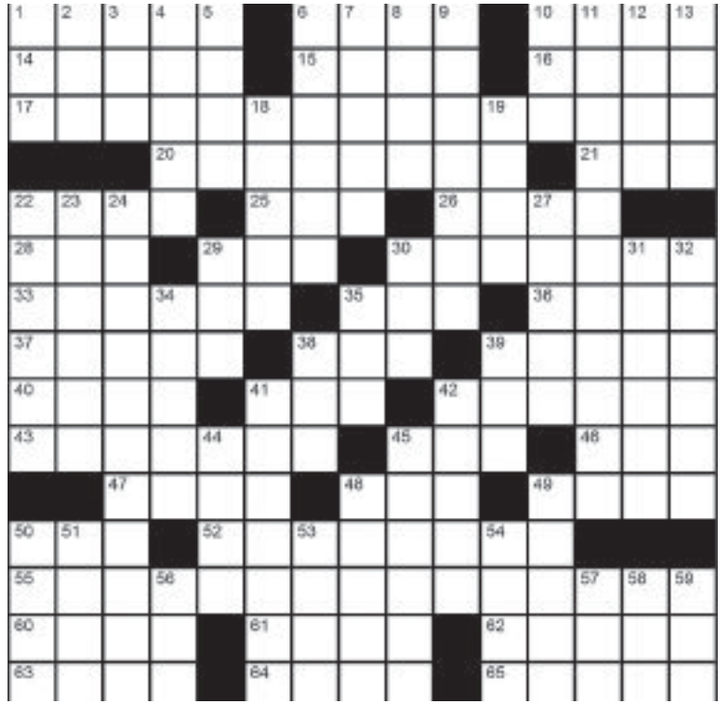
Nutrition per serving
- Calories 264
- Protein 23 g
- Carbohydrates 10 g
- Fibre 1.2 g
- Total fat 14.6 g
- Saturated fat 3.0 g
- Cholesterol 74 mg
- Sodium 270 mg

PHOTO: ROSE REISMAN

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

ANSWERS ONLINE metronews.ca



ACROSS
1. Upcoming comedy, "Paul _: Mall Cop 2" (2015)
6. Mario Puzo character
10. Bright fish
14. Oddity
15. With: French
16. Other
17. Nova Scotia: The Lighthouse Route is one scenic drive ...and this is another: 2 wds.
20. Quebec city/river
21. Edible tuber
22. Donkey/horse
25. Bronze Roman money
26. Headland
28. _ _ budget
29. Docs
30. "Remedy" on Global TV star, Diego _ (Trivia! He won the first VJ Search for Much-Music in 1995)
33. MLS properties
35. Gives birth
36. Collector's suffix
37. Cook's covering
38. Criticize
39. Fibre-_ cable
40. CNN's "The Wonder List with Bill _"
41. Clear
42. "Anchors _" (1945)
43. Triangular bone
45. Canadian hoops org.
46. Slade's "Take Me Bak '_"
47. Ink stain
48. Scottish writer Josephine
49. _ _ the kill
50. Hearer
52. Cameron _ (Canadian actor/TV host)
55. Subject of "Lord of War" (2005) starring Nicolas Cage: 3 wds.
60. Stare, stunned-style
61. Q. "Is '_.' _ way to abbreviate Dublin's land?" A. "Indeed."
62. Serf of Sparta
63. US IDs
64. Actress Barbara
65. Acadian singer Ms. Butler

DOWN
1. Pre-A.D. indicator
2. Sweetie
3. The Altar constellation
4. Clean the fruit
5. Attire for Augustus
6. Appraises
7. Brick wall plants
8. Memphis, _.
9. Water-related Titan
10. Poetic preposition
11. Sony gaming system
12. Laos' locale
13. Leadership position
18. "My word!"
19. Salmon sort
22. Punk rocker hairstyle
23. Closed
24. Host of CBC Radio 2 program The Signal (Trivia! She is a Much-Music alum and has a cameo in Corey Hart's "Sunglasses at Night" video): 2 wds.
27. Straight-billed marsh bird
29. Fellows
30. Room cooler
31. Puzzling problem
32. Perfumed pouch
34. _-Tracy, Quebec
35. Milliner's creation
38. Liveliness
39. Mouse muncher
41. Canadian musician Ms. MacMaster
42. Chasm
44. 1978 movie for Canadian actress Genevieve Bujold
45. American retailer, _ Marcus
48. Two-plus-one's sum
49. Chris de Burgh's "The Lady _ _"
50. Shelled things
51. Woeful word
53. Alimentation Couche-_ Inc. (Canadian convenience store company)
54. Will-_'-_-wisp
56. Library fare, briefly
57. Ms. Landry
58. Polka's pal
59. Ordinal suffix

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